DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 040 JC 760 477

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TITLE Exit Interviews: An Analysis of Orientation and Exit Interviews as an Answer to Follow-up Apathy. TEX-SIS FOLLOW-UP SC1.
INSTITUTION Alvin Community Coll., Tex.
SPONS AGENCY Tarrant County Junior Coll. District, Ft. Worth, Tex.; Texas Education Agency, Austin. Div. of Occupational Research and Development.
REPORT NO SC1
PUB DATE Aug 76
NOTE 58p.; For related documents, see JC 760 473-483

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Data Collection; Dropouts; *Followup Studies; Graduate Surveys; Institutional Research; Interviews; *Junior Colleges; *Orientation; Questionnaires; *Student Reaction; Withdrawal
IDENTIFIERS *Exit Interviews; *Project FOLLOW UP; Student Followup Management Information System; Texas; TEX SIS FOLLOW UP

ABSTRACT

This report presents the findings of a research study conducted by Alvin Community College (ACC) as a subcontractor for Project FOLLOW-UP, which analyzed orientation and exit interview effects and their relationship to follow-up research on selected withdrawing and graduating students at ACC. Subjects of the study were 595 ACC students, 257 males and 338 females. Follow-up questionnaires were formulated using standard developmental techniques. Graduating and withdrawing students were exit interviewed by staff personnel and some received an orientation to future follow-up questionnaires. In addition, a sample of the study subjects received the treatment by telephone rather than in person. It was found that graduating and withdrawing students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires were much more likely to subsequently respond to follow-up questionnaires than students receiving exit interviews and no orientation. It was recommended that exit interviews with orientation to future follow-up contact are worthwhile institutional investments and that questionnaire-type follow-up programs should be conducted to provide current feedback from nonreturning students. Such information can enhance student retention. Questionnaires, related materials, and a bibliography are appended. (JDS)

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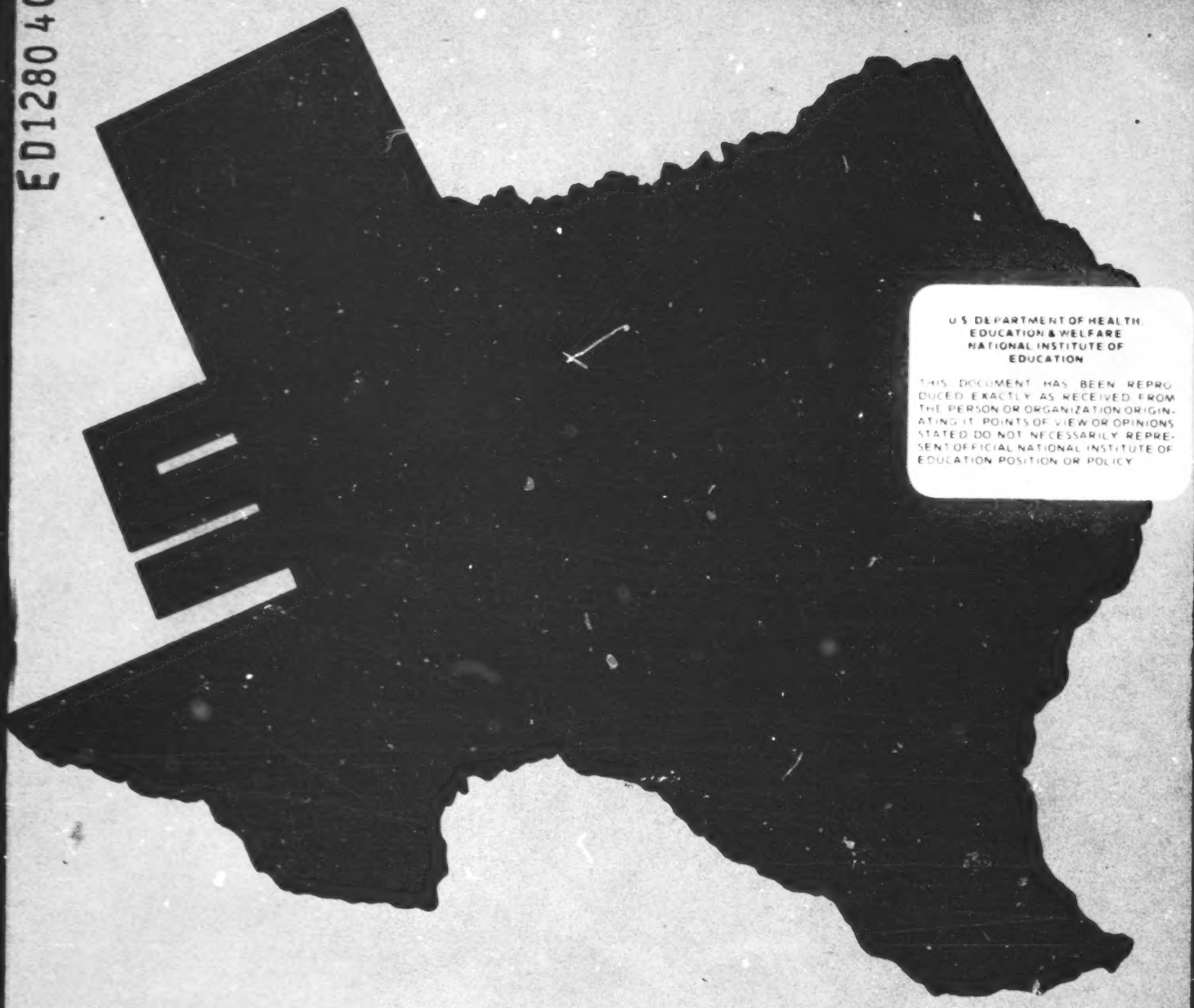

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SC1
Exit Interviews
By Alvin Community College

PROJECT FOLLOW-UP

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

2

JC 760 477

AN ANALYSIS OF ORIENTATION AND EXIT INTERVIEWS AS AN ANSWER TO FOLLOW-UP APATHY

By
Alvin Community College
Alvin, Texas

Prepared
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This subcontract was supported by funds from the Division of Occupational Research and Development, Department of Occupational and Technical Education, Texas Education Agency.

August 1976

Gratitude is expressed to all those individuals who worked many hard hours and gave unselfishly of their time and skills to make this project a success. Special recognition is given to:

Mr. Elmo Marburger, Dean of Student Services

Mr. William N. Whitlow, Associate Dean of Students

Mr. Gerald Pullen, Asst. Professor of Computer Sciences

Mrs. Agnes Collins, Secretarial Staff

Mrs. Deborah McEwan, Secretarial Staff

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INTRODUCTION

What is Project FOLLOW-UP?

As a result of recommendations by The Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas to the State Board of Education, a legislative mandate stated that funds "shall be expended for the purpose of developing data directly relating to programs conducted by public junior colleges and shall be for the purpose of developing systems for use by the junior colleges."

The Texas Education Agency initiated procedures to design the system. After consultation with an advisory committee of community college educators, TEA requested proposals from Texas colleges and universities to contract for the design of the system. Proposals were received from several institutions and, after review and evaluation by the Advisory Committee and the TEA, Tarrant County Junior College was selected as the prime contractor. As a result, Project FOLLOW-UP became operational on May 15, 1974.

Purpose and Objectives:

The specific purpose of Project FOLLOW-UP is to develop, test and validate a management information system for the follow-up of students who enter Texas public community and junior colleges. The system will be designed for use by machine or manual processing, and therefore suitable for both large and small public two-year colleges.

Included in the system development are procedures to assure

interface with present state reporting systems and utilization of presently operating Texas community college follow-up systems. Sub-systems for students seeking degrees, certificates, skill acquisition, skill upgrading, etc., in both credit and non-credit areas, also will be developed. Flexibility will be maintained so that Texas community colleges can institute the system by adapting it to unique needs of that institution. Community colleges will share in the overall development of the system on a select subcontractor basis, and will be kept abreast of Project FOLLOW-UP's activities through institutional representatives.

Project FOLLOW-UP is fully supported by funds from the Division of Occupational Research and Development, Department of Occupational and Technical Education, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas 77701.

Alvin Community College is one of seven individual subcontracts issued by Tarrant County Junior College, Project FOLLOW-UP, to Texas public community/junior colleges as part of a coordinated effort to design a student follow-up management information system. The seven subcontractors and their proposed activities are:

Alvin Community College: Orientation and exit interviews of drop outs and non-returnees.

Amarillo College: Employer follow-up on graduates.

College of the Mainland: Representative sampling.

Del Mar College: Follow-up instrumentation and methodology; academic and vocational-technical graduate follow-up; manual vs. machine processing.

San Antonio Junior College: Academic and vocational-technical graduate follow-up; orientation and conditioning; student data base; follow-up instrumentation and methodology.

Western Texas College: Student data base (student flow and follow-up); manual vs. machine processing.

Navarro College: Follow-up cost manhour study.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Student Attrition

Research on student attrition in Junior Colleges reflects rates which are somewhat higher than those found in four year colleges (Hampton, 1970). Trent and Medsker (1968), in a follow-up study of 10,000 high school students, found an overall attrition rate of 40% of which Junior Colleges were the largest contributors. Oston (1972), confirms that a higher drop out rate at Junior Colleges is more prevalent than at four year colleges and universities.

Speculation in the literature as to the reasons for college drop outs is abundant. Astin (1972), concludes that the higher rate of student attrition in Junior Colleges is primarily attributable to a lower level of motivation and academic preparation for students entering college. In contrast, Dickinson (1973), pointed out that Junior College withdrawers were carrying a medium credit load of 15.2 semesters hours compared to 14.3 semester hours for the whole university. Dickinson found that 61% of students who completely withdraw from college had also dropped courses prior to withdrawing from college.

Regardless of the number of studies comparing Junior College students with senior college students, and there are many (Richards and Braskamp (1967), Blocker, et. al. (1965), Cooley and Becker (1966), Ellish (1969), Cross (1968), etc.), Hillway (1958), Medsker (1960), and others emphasize that there is no clear cut distinction between junior college and senior college students abilities as shown by a considerable overlap of SCAT and other ability test

scores. Mauss (1967), considers the one big difference between two and four year college students to be that the Junior College students, being primarily commuters, tend strongly to identify with their community rather than with their college.

Junior College Withdrawal

The reasons for college withdrawal, according to Lynch (1960), Marks (1967), Trent and Medsker (1968), is the result of multiple factors. The consensus of research finds lack of interest and motivation are significant factors as much as, or more than, ability and financial resources. Aiken (1968) and Omari (1941) claim finds such as these, and the conclusions based upon them, should be under continuous investigation, for a number of researchers emphasize that often the given reasons for withdrawal may be a cover up or a defensive response. If Aiken's and Omari's conclusions are accurate, the true reasons for college withdrawals have yet to stand a test of emperical validation.

Exit Interviews

If lack of interest and motivation are significant factors for college withdrawals, them response apathy to follow-up questionnaires may be reduced through exit interviews. According to Donald (1960), orientation of questionnaire recipients tends to increase response rates to mail questionnaires. A response to mail questionnaires is better when the respondent had a special interest or involvement in the content area covered by the questionnaire. Burchinal (1960) stated that whether or not a questionnaire is returned, is dependent upon the subject's approval

of the problem under study, and whether or not the subject has a positive relationship with the agency conducting the research. Toops (1935) confirms the importance of the topic as a most important factor in receiving a high return note to mail questionnaires. Cartwright (1949) speaks of a bonding or stimulus response chain when the exit interview becomes the stimulus and the mail questionnaire becomes the response. He states that a person will have to be reached "cognitively" and that this message to respond must reach the sense organs of the person who is to respond.

Yet exit interviews are costly and time consuming. The Sarasota (1974) experiment has shown that the exit interview was the most difficult, time consuming, and possibly the most crucial part of their Placement and Follow-Up model. In the Sarasota experiment the main difficulties arose from students who did not exit at an even, daily rate, but rather at periods of high and low departures periodically throughout the school year, and that a number of "no shows" failed to return to begin a new school year.

Shuttleworth (1931) included a twenty-five cent reward with his questionnaire to determine if this would increase the percentage of return. The percentage of return was higher, but the added expense prohibited the use of monetary rewards.

In summary, there is an overall consensus that the attrition rate in junior colleges is higher than it is in senior colleges and universities. Speculation as to the reasons for college withdrawal is inconclusive. Research is abundant in comparing

academic preparation and motivation with the identification of the community, the college environment, the two year college student versus the four year college student, etc. Because of all the differing hypothesis for college drop outs, follow-up questionnaires continue to play an important role in the management of student attrition. One way to increase the response rate to mail questionnaires is through the exit interview. Although the exit interview is a difficult and time consuming precursary to the follow-up questionnaire, research confirms its importance by increasing subjects' response rates to follow-up questionnaires.

AN ANALYSIS OF ORIENTATION AND EXIT INTERVIEWS AS AN ANSWER TO FOLLOW-UP APATHY

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was an analysis of orientation and exit interviews of selected drop out and graduating students at Alvin Community College.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to determine the effects of orientation and exit interviews to follow-up research on selected withdrawing and graduating students at Alvin Community College.

Definition of Terms

Orientation: Familiarizing a student with Project Follow-Up, and requesting the student to respond to future follow-up questionnaires.

Exit Interview: A consultation conducted by a counselor to ascertain the reason a student is withdrawing from college, to provide some guidance and alternative options, also to provide orientation to Project Follow-Up.

Telephone Exit Interview: A telephone consultation conducted by the Counseling Center receptionist to ascertain the reason a student is withdrawing from college. Orientation to Project Follow-Up is conducted whenever applicable.

Withdrawing Student: A student who does not complete the semester in which he is presently enrolled, regardless of his reason for termination.

Graduating Student: A student who has completed all requirements for the Associate Degree or Certificate of Completion, and who has requested to graduate.

Control Group: Graduating or withdrawing students who were/were not exit interviewed in person or by telephone. The interview did not include an orientation of Project Follow-Up.

Hypothesis

To carry out the purposes of this study, the following hypothesis have been formulated:

1. Withdrawing students who are exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than withdrawing students who are exit interviewed and not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires.

2. Withdrawing students who are telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than withdrawing students who are telephone exit interviewed and not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires.

3. Withdrawing students who are exit interviewed will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up returns than withdrawing students who are not exit interviewed.

4. Graduating students who are exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than graduating students who are exit interviewed and not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires.

5. Graduating students who are telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than graduating students who are telephone exit interviewed and not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires.

6. Graduating students who are exit interviewed will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up returns than graduating students who are not exit interviewed.

Limitations

This study was limited by the fact that group orientation methods could not be conducted with withdrawing students, as the frequency of withdrawals provided an unsuitable format for such orientation procedures.

A second limitation was the fact that the period of time allowed for this project prohibited group orientations of graduating students, especially in view of the limited population which was available for the purposes of this study.

A third limitation was the fact that the computerized follow-up system was inoperational at the completion of this project and could not be tested.

Basic Assumptions

It was assumed that all subjects would respond honestly to the exit questionnaire and to the follow-up questionnaire. It was further assumed that the subject's responses were made from their own knowledge and perception, and not to some hypothetical construct involving ideal responses to the follow-up questionnaire.

Procedures for Collecting Data

After a student has terminated his education at Alvin Community College, in the eighth week of the following long semester, a follow-up questionnaire was mailed to the student. The follow-up questionnaire was mailed bulk rate, with address correction requested, in an envelope containing a postage paid return envelope, a reminder statement of the purposes of Project Follow-Up, and a follow-up questionnaire. (See appendix).

Two weeks after the initial mailout, a second mailout to students who had not responded to the initial mailout was conducted. The questionnaire was mailed first class mail, address correction requested, with a postage paid return envelope, a second reminder statement of the purposes of Project Follow-Up, and a follow-up questionnaire. (See appendix).

After allowing three weeks for response time, the return data was compiled and prepared for analysis. Responses returned after this time were not included in this study.

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Description of the Population

The participants in this study were 595 college students, 257 males and 338 females. All students were enrolled in semester hour credit courses, with curriculums in university parallel or vocational-technical educational programs. Those students who were not enrolled in a particular curriculum were assigned a temporary major until a decision for concentrated study was reached by them.

Of the 595 college students involved in this study, 119 (20%) were freshman males and 125 (21%) were freshman females. 139 (23%) participants were sophomore males while 212 (36%) participants were sophomore females. All students in this study were selected from a student body population of 2,570 students, with ages ranging between 17 and 50+ years. The mean age for the entire Alvin Community College student body is 28 years, while the mean age of the participants of this study is 28 years.

All participants who were selected for this study were either students graduating with the Associate Degree in Arts, the Associate Degree in Science or Mathematics, Vocational or Technical Certificates, or were either totally withdrawing* from Alvin Community College, or have failed to attend classes and were resultingly officially dropped or withdrawn by the college for non attendance.

* Total withdrawal indicates complete termination as a student at Alvin Community College, not the partial withdrawal of a particular curriculum.

Description of the Questionnaire

After the standard developmental procedures such as review of the literature, visitation of campuses, questioning knowledgeable individuals, etc., a list of probable questions and an appropriate questionnaire format were designed by the Counseling Office. (See Project Follow-Up Questionnaire Generator). This questionnaire generator was routed through administrative and faculty offices for input and specific suggestions. (See attachments...).

Most administrators and faculty responded appropriately and provided valuable guidelines in their areas of expertise. Those individuals who did not respond initially were given a second opportunity to do so.

From the list of submitted questions, the Alvin Community College Follow-Up Questionnaire was developed. (See appendix).

Once the responses from the Follow-Up Questionnaire are received, the individual items are tabulated and a report to the various departments and administrative offices of the college is disseminated. Selected items from the questionnaire are placed on a permanent data record, maintained by the Alvin Community College Computer Center. The data gathered are deemed necessary for state and federal reports.

On request, the administration may initiate a computerized follow-up questionnaire, (see appendix), to be mailed to all former students who have responded to previous follow-up surveys. Address changes and non deliverable correspondence will

be corrected on a permanent master file.

Description of the Follow-Up Questionnaire

An exit questionnaire was used for orientation-exit interviewing purposes. (See attachment). This questionnaire provided the interviewer with some basic student data which could be correllated with a permanent student data file. Basic demographic information, as well as reason (s) for educational termination at Alvin Community College, provided vehicles for student exit interviews and provided a format to explain the purposes for Project Follow-Up. The mailing of a second questionnaire, (see attachment), containing 55 items to be rated from excellent to unsatisfactory would complete a procedure, one with which the student had already been familiarized. A reminder letter as to the purpose of Project Follow-Up, and a self-addressed return postage guarantee envelope would accompany the second questionnaire.

Justification for the questionnaire format and mailing procedure were based on work performed by Sletto (1940), Blumberg, Fuller, and Hare (1971), and Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963). Their conclusions suggest that the length of a survey has less effect on returns than may be supposed, and that questionnaires should have an attractive appearance and look easy to fill out. Dillman (1972), found that an explanation of the study and the respondents place in it, has had a substantial positive effect on returns. The fact that questionnaires can be traced to the responder do not seem to affect response rates. According to Scott (1968), there

were no significant differences among those affected by degree of anonymity, or the form of identification used (name and address, telephone number, or code number).

Kephart and Bressler (1958), state it is usually standard practice to assure respondents that the individual results will be kept confidential, and any such assurances should be strictly adhered to by the investigators.

According to Nichols and Meyer (1966), the effect of reminders, (with replacement questionnaires), have a substantial effect and indeed are essential for obtaining satisfactory response rates.

Description of the Exit Interview: (Drop Outs)

As part of the final clearing process, every student who officially withdraws from Alvin Community College is automatically processed to the Counseling Center. Withdrawing students are encouraged to come by the Counseling Center in person rather than telephone for clearance purposes.

When a withdrawing student enters the Counseling Center, he/she is met by a receptionist who administers an exit interview questionnaire. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the withdrawing student is escorted to a counselor's office, and the completed exit interview questionnaire is given to the counselor. The counselor creates a non-threatening environment leading to an in-depth session, assessing the immediate and long term causes for the student's withdrawal. The counselor expresses a confidentiality concerning information which is being received. The

exit interview questionnaire is reviewed jointly, (counselor and withdrawing student), and the student is encouraged to respond honestly and with complete freedom to all options in the questionnaire. The counselor informs the withdrawing student of the purposes of Project Follow-Up, and orients the student that this is the initial contact of a follow-up program and that the student will receive another more lenghty questionnaire from the counselor in about two months. The withdrawing student is encouraged to respond to the questionnaire when he/she does receive it. The counselor expresses the importance of the responses, especially the response from the student who is presently being exit interviewed.

Concern for the student's well-being is expressed; and if the student still wishes to withdraw from college, he/she is aided by the counselor's receptionist for the remainder of the clearing process.

Description of the Exit Interview: (Graduates)

One of the requirements for graduation or certification at Alvin Community College is the completion of application for graduation or certification. After the application for graduation or certification has been submitted to the Registrar's Office and the Registrar's Office has reviewed the candidate's completion of courses, the student is listed on a roster of graduates.

Graduates are selected by a systematic process from this roster and then are requested to come by the Counseling Office

for a process clearing them for graduation. (See attachment).

When the graduating student enters the Counseling Office, he/she is met by a receptionist who administers an amended exit interview questionnaire. (See attachment). Upon completion of the questionnaire, the graduating student is escorted to a counselor's office, and the completed exit interview questionnire is given to the counselor. The counselor creates a non-threatening environment and expresses the confidentiality of the information which is being received. The counselor informs the graduating student of the purposes of Project Follow-Up, then orients the student that this is the initial contact of a follow-up program, and that he/she will receive another more lengthy questionnaire from the counselor in about two months. The student is encouraged to respond to the questionnaire when he/she does receive it. The importance of the response is stressed, especially the response from the student who is presently being exit interviewed by the counselor.

Description of the Exit Interview: (Telephone)

Whenever a withdrawing student is unable to visit the Counseling Center for purposes of withdrawing, the Counseling Center receptionist administers the exit interview over the telephone to the withdrawing student. The receptionist follows the same basic inquiry and orientation procedures as does a counselor during exit interviews where the exit interview is conducted face to face.

Personal concern for the student's well-being is transmitted by the receptionist over the telephone. The confidentiality of

the information received is stressed. The purposes of Project Follow-Up, and an orientation to a second follow-up questionnaire which will be mailed to the student in two months, are discussed. The receptionist stresses the importance of the student's response to the second follow-up questionnaire. (See attachment).

COMPUTER FOLLOW-UP ON NON RETURNING STUDENTS

This system is designed to collect data on students who do not re-enroll in Alvin Community College. The purpose is to evaluate student attitudes and opinions about Alvin Community College's programs and to provide a means of analyzing the relationships between a student's studies and his subsequent employment and/or continued education.

The name, current address, and student ID of students who do not re-enroll in the spring or fall semesters are taken from the student data base maintained by the college. These names are entered in a special file and are purged after 5 years. The data required to support the system are collected by means of three questionnaires. (See attachments). Two of the questionnaires are intended to be given to students, preferably in an interview setting, as soon as it is determined that they are indeed not re-enrolling. These questionnaires collect data on the area of college studies, reasons for not continuing, and an evaluation of Alvin Community College programs and services. The third questionnaire is intended to be mailed once a year for five years to students whose names are on file. It is designed to collect data on the impact that a student's studies at Alvin Community College has had on his employment or continuing education.

All of the questionnaires are constructed in check-the-box or circle-the-answer form to increase the probability of an accurate student response. Another design feature is that the

data collected by the questionnaires can be punched directly into computer cards without being transcribed.

There are four computer programs required for this system. The first one performs file maintenance functions such as adding, deleting or correcting student records. The second generates mailing labels and updates student records by recording the questionnaire results. The third program generates a report on the reasons students give for leaving Alvin Community College and their evaluation of Alvin Community College programs and services. The report is broken down by year and ultimately will show trends. The last program will report on the relationship that Alvin Community College studies appear to have on subsequent employment and/or continued education. This report has breakdowns by area of study, and number of years since leaving Alvin Community College, to permit an assessment of the usefulness of instructional programs at Alvin Community College.

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COLUMN

Student Followup Interview (1). 1

____(1) Day Student ____(2) Night Student ____(3) Both 2

Social Security Number _____ 3

Name _____

Permanent Address _____ 12
Street

_____ 32
City

_____ 52
State & Zip Code

Area of College Studies - Check one: 59

____(A) Liberal Arts
____(B) Science & Mathematics
____(C) Business Administration
____(D) Accounting
____(E) Data Processing
____(F) Health Services (Nursing, Child Care, etc.)
____(G) Electronics
____(H) Drafting
____(I) Law Enforcement
____(J) Mid-management
____(K) Office Services (Secretarial, Stenographic, etc.)
____(L) Welding
____(M) Air Conditioning
____(N) Other

Were you employed this semester? ____(1) No ____(2) 1/4 Time 60
____(3) 1/2 Time ____(4) 3/4 Time ____(5) Full Time

Do you plan to return to this College? 61
____(1) Yes ____(2) No ____(3) Not Sure

Do you plan to transfer to a four year College? 62
____(1) Yes ____(2) No ____(3) Not Sure

How well do you feel this College has served you? 63
____(1) Excellently ____(2) Adequately ____(3) Poorly

Please check one or more reasons for your withdrawal. 64

____(A) Goals accomplished
____(B) Insufficient funds
____(C) Personal/family illness/accident
____(D) Transportation problem
____(E) Unhappy with schedule
____(F) Family moving away
____(G) Going to another school
____(H) Conflicting job hours
____(I) Not enough study time
____(J) Change in career goals
____(K) Personal, prefer not to state
____(L) Going to work full time. If you checked (L), have you found a job yet?
____(Y) Yes ____(N) No
____(M) Other

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Column

Student Followup Interview (2) 1

Social Security Number _____ 2

Name _____

How would you rate Alvin Junior College in the following categories?
(Please circle the option which best expresses your point of view.)

Excellent 1 Good 2 Satisfactory 3 Poor 4 Unsatisfactory 5 No Opinion 6

1. a.	Course offerings	1	2	3	4	5	6	11
b.	Location	1	2	3	4	5	6	12
c.	Teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	13
d.	Cafeteria	1	2	3	4	5	6	14
e.	Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	15
f.	Cost	1	2	3	4	5	6	16
g.	Student services	1	2	3	4	5	6	17
h.	Parking	1	2	3	4	5	6	18
i.	Equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6	19
j.	Buildings	1	2	3	4	5	6	20
k.	Library collections	1	2	3	4	5	6	21
l.	Financial aid services	1	2	3	4	5	6	22
2. a.	Academic standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	23
b.	Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6	24
c.	Registration	1	2	3	4	5	6	25
d.	Counseling Center services	1	2	3	4	5	6	26
e.	Advisor system	1	2	3	4	5	6	27
f.	Freshman orientation program	1	2	3	4	5	6	28
g.	Assistance for finding employment	1	2	3	4	5	6	29
3. a.	Quality of instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6	30
b.	Faculty interest in students	1	2	3	4	5	6	31
c.	Class size	1	2	3	4	5	6	32
d.	Grading and testing procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	33
e.	Faculty availability for conferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	34
f.	Circle #6 if you have read this line	1	2	3	4	5	6	35
g.	Counseling for course selection	1	2	3	4	5	6	36
h.	Counseling for personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	37
i.	Student influence in college decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	38
j.	Variety of extracurricular activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	39
k.	Overall college atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	6	40

Please circle Yes or No on the following questions.

4. How could the school be changed to improve its programs?

a.	Fewer required courses	Yes	No	41
b.	More counseling center services	Yes	No	42
c.	More job and career information	Yes	No	43
d.	Offer more courses *(specify)* _____	Yes	No	44
e.	Increase student-teacher contact	Yes	No	45
f.	Reduce class size	Yes	No	46
g.	Offer more job training courses (vocational-technical)	Yes	No	47
h.	Offer more assistance in finding employment	Yes	No	48

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Column

Student Followup Questionnaire (3) 1

Social Security Number _____ 2

Name _____

Permanent Address _____ 11
Street

_____ 31
City

_____ 51
State *Zip Code*

Please circle Yes or No for each of the following questions.

1. Are you presently employed?	Yes	No	58
2. If so, does the job correspond directly to your studies at Alvin Community College?	Yes	No	59
3. Did your education at Alvin Community College help you get the job?	Yes	No	60
4. Has your education helped you get promotions?	Yes	No	61
5. Did you continue your education at one of the following schools?			
University of Houston/Clear Lake	Yes	No	62
University of Houston (Houston)	Yes	No	63
Texas A & M University	Yes	No	64
University of Texas (Austin)	Yes	No	65
Other _____ *Specify*	Yes	No	66
6. Did you receive an advanced degree?	Yes	No	67

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Analysis of the Data

In hypothesis I, it was predicted that withdrawing students who are exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than withdrawing students who are exit interviewed and not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires. The number and percentage of withdrawing students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, and the number and percentage of withdrawing students who were exit interviewed and not oriented, as well as the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires mailed to each group, and the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires received from each group is presented in Table I.

TABLE I

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED FOR EXIT INTERVIEWED, ORIENTED AND NON ORIENTED WITHDRAWING STUDENTS.

(Group) Withdrawing Students	N	%	Questionnaires Mailed * (N)	%	Questionnaires Received (N)	%
Exit Interviewed and Follow-Up Oriented	60	100	48	80	20	41
Exit Interviewed and No Orientation	60	100	48	80	12	26

*Denotes a 20% non-forwardable mail out. N reflects the adjusted mail completion to subject by Alvin Community College.

Inspection of Table I reveals that approximately 80% of all withdrawing students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. 41% of all withdrawing students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires and who were reached by mail, responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire.

Approximately 80% of all withdrawing students who were exit interviewed only received follow-up questionnaires by mail. Of this group, 26% responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire to Alvin Community College.

In hypothesis II, it was predicted that withdrawing students who are telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than withdrawing students who are telephone exit interviewed and are not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires. The number and percentage of withdrawing students who were telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, and the number and percentage of withdrawing students who were telephone exit interviewed and not oriented, as well as the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires mailed to each group, and the percentage of follow-up questionnaires received from each group is presented in Table II.

TABLE II

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED FOR TELEPHONE EXIT INTERVIEWED, ORIENTED AND NON ORIENTED WITHDRAWING STUDENTS.

(Group) Withdrawing Students	N	%	Questionnaires Mailed *(N)	%	Questionnaires Received (N)	%
Telephone Exit Interviewed and Follow-up Oriented	60	100	48	80	15	31
Telephone Exit Interviewed and No Orientation	60	100	48	80	11	24

*Denotes a 20% non-forwardable mail out. N reflects the adjusted mail completion to subjects by Alvin Community College.

Inspection of Table II reveals that approximately 80% of all withdrawing students who were telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. 31% of all withdrawing students who were telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires and who were reached by mail, responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire.

Approximately 80% of all withdrawing students who were telephone exit interviewed only received follow-up questionnaires by mail. Of this group, 24% responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire to Alvin Community College.

In hypothesis III, it was predicted that withdrawing students who are exit interviewed will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up returns than withdrawing students who are not exit interviewed. The number and percentage of withdrawing students who

were exit interviewed, and the number and percentage of withdrawing students who were not exit interviewed or oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, as well as the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires mailed to each group, and the percentage of follow-up questionnaires received from each group is presented in Table III.

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED FOR EXIT INTERVIEWED AND NON EXIT INTERVIEWED WITHDRAWING STUDENTS.

(Group) Withdrawing Students	(N)	%	Questionnaires Mailed *(N)	%	Questionnaires Received (N)	%
Exit Interviewed	60	100	48	80	19	41
No Exit Interview	60	100	48	80	5	12

*Denotes a 20% non-forwardable mail out. N reflects the adjusted mail completion to subjects by Alvin Community College.

Inspection of Table III reveals that 80% of all withdrawing students who were exit interviewed received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. 41% of all withdrawing students who were exit interviewed, and who were reached by mail, responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire.

Approximately 80% of all withdrawing students who were selected for this study and received no exit interview or orientation to future follow-up questionnaires, received a follow-up

questionnaire in the mail. Of this group, 12% responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire to Alvin Community College.

In hypothesis IV, it was predicted that graduating students who are exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than graduating students who are exit interviewed and not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires. The number and percentage of graduating students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, and the number and percentage of graduating students who were exit interviewed and not oriented, as well as the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires mailed to each group, and the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires received from each group is presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED FOR EXIT INTERVIEWED, ORIENTED AND NON ORIENTED GRADUATING STUDENTS.

(Group Graduating Students	(N)	%	Questionnaires Mailed *(N)	%	Questionnaires Received (N)	%
Exit Interviewed and Follow-Up Oriented	60	100	48	80	19	41
Exit Interviewed and No Orientation	60	100	48	80	5	12

*Denotes a 20% non-forwardable mail out. N reflects the adjusted mail completion to subjects by Alvin Community College.

Inspection of Table IV reveals that approximately 80% of all graduating students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. 41% of all graduating students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, and who were reached by mail, responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire.

Approximately 80% of all graduating students who were exit interviewed only, received a follow-up questionnaire by mail. Of this group, 12% responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire to Alvin Community College.

In hypothesis V, it was predicted that graduating students who are telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up responses than graduating students who are telephone exit interviewed and are not oriented to future follow-up questionnaires. The number and percentage of graduating students who were telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, and the number and percentage of graduating students who were telephone exit interviewed and not oriented, as well as the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires mailed to each group, and the percentage of follow-up questionnaires received from each group is presented in Table V.

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED FOR TELEPHONE EXIT INTERVIEWED, ORIENTED AND NON ORIENTED GRADUATING STUDENTS.

(Group) Graduating Students	N	%	Questionnaires Mailed *(N)	%	Questionnaires Received (N)	%
Telephone Exit Interviewed and Oriented	59	100	47	80	21	44
Telephone Exit Interviewed No Orientation	59	100	47	80	16	33

*Denotes a 20% non-forwardable mail out. N reflects the adjusted mail completion to subjects by Alvin Community College.

Inspection of Table V reveals that approximately 80% of all graduating students who were telephone exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. 44% of all graduating students who were exit interviewed and oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, and who were reached by mail, responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire.

Approximately 80% of all graduating students who were telephone exit interviewed only received a follow-up questionnaire by mail. Of this group, 33% responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire to Alvin Community College.

In hypothesis VI, it was predicted that graduating students who are exit interviewed will respond with a higher percentage of follow-up returns than graduating students who are not exit interviewed. The number and percentage of graduating students who were

exit interviewed, and the number and percentage of graduating students who were not exit interviewed or oriented to future follow-up questionnaires, as well as the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires mailed to each group, and the number and percentage of follow-up questionnaires received from each group is presented in Table VI.

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED FOR EXIT INTERVIEWED AND NON EXIT INTERVIEWED GRADUATING STUDENTS.

(Group) Graduating Students	N	%	Questionnaires Mailed *(N)	%	Questionnaires Returned (N)	%
Exit Interviewed	59	100	47	80	16	35
No Exit Interview	59	100	47	80	15	26

*Denotes a 20% non-forwardable mail out. N reflects the adjusted mail completion to subjects by Alvin Community College.

Inspection of Table VI reveals that approximately 80% of all graduating students who were exit interviewed received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. 35% of all graduating students who were exit interviewed, and who were reached by mail, responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire.

Approximately 80% of all graduating students who were selected for this study and received no exit interview or orientation to future follow-up questionnaires, received a follow-up questionnaire in the mail. Of this group, 26% responded by returning their completed follow-up questionnaire to Alvin Community College.

Discussion of the Data

Of the 595 withdrawing and graduating Alvin Community College students studied, 50% of the students were withdrawing students, and 50% were graduating students.

The sample of withdrawing Alvin Community College students consisted of 116 freshman males (39%), 125 freshman females (40%), 35 sophomore males (12%), and 27 sophomore females (9%). A total of 306 students comprised the withdrawing student population.

The sample of graduating Alvin Community College students consisted of 113 sophomore males (36%) and 186 sophomore females (64%). A total of 297 students comprised the graduating student population.

The number of undeliverable letters mailed to students reflected no consistent trends of transiency for any one particular subgroup of this study. For this reason, all subgroups mail outs by Alvin Community College were prorated by a 20% attrition rate. This rate is reflected in the adjusted questionnaire mail out collumns in Tables I through VI. Speculation as to the 20% student transiency rate may reflect present economic conditions prevalent in the Houston area at this particular time.

It is interesting to note that the highest response frequency was from freshman females (41%). It was also interesting to note that the lowest general response rate was from sophomore males (13.8%). The mean response rate by sex was 19%.

A grand total of 33% of the follow-up questionnaires were returned by the entire population tested.

Exit interviews and orientation for withdrawing students yielded the same response rate as did exit interviews only. (See Table I and Table III.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were supported. Further analysis of the data revealed that 20% of all attempts to contact former students by mail was unsuccessful. The largest number of returned questionnaires arrived after the fifth day of the initial mail out, and on the fifth day after the first reminder letter containing a second questionnaire.

Conclusions

From the review of the literature, it was discovered that student attrition in Junior Colleges is a problem which has been under investigation for a number of years. The approach to a reduction in student attrition is contingent on viable feedback from the withdrawing non returning students. One of the most popular methods to retrieve such information is through a questionnaire. Typical response rates for mail questionnaires range from 25 to 50 percent, with a number of reminder letters, incentives, and duplicated questionnaires remailed to potential responders any number of times. Typical first time response rates to initial mail outs is 25 to 30 percent (Coast Community College District Study, 1974).

Utilizing exit interviews and orientations for future contacts on withdrawing and non returning students has generated a response rate of 26 to 41 percent. This is remarkably high when compared to a response rate of 12 percent for those students who were neither exit interviewed, nor oriented to future follow-up contacts.

Exit interviews and orientation on graduating students has generated a response rate up to 44 percent compared to a response rate of 26 percent for graduating students who were neither exit interviewed nor oriented to future follow-up contacts.

Orientation to future follow-up contacts is best conducted through exit interviews. Most junior colleges already conduct exit interviews on non returning students as part of their regular counseling procedures. Orientation to follow-up research may be included during such exit interviews at little added expense to the institution conducting such research.

Recommendations

It is recommended that exit interviews with orientation to future follow-up contact are a worthwhile investment for institutions desiring a higher response rate to follow-up questionnaires.

It is further recommended that a questionnaire type follow-up program be conducted by institutions desiring current feedbacks from their non returning population. Such information may be disseminated to faculty and administrators on a yearly basis, and can greatly enhance student retention in view of eliminating causes for student attrition.

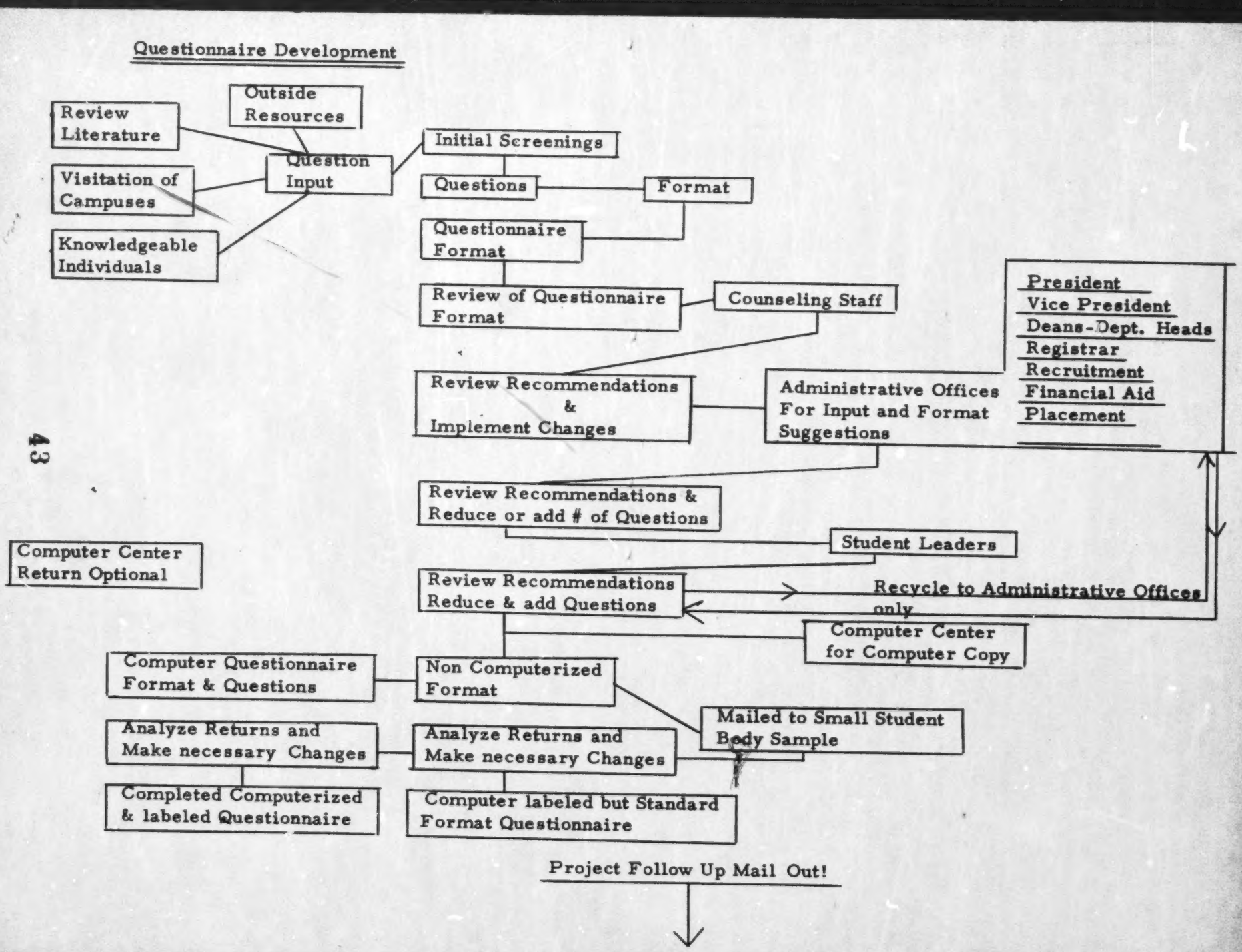
APPENDIX

MEMO TO:

FROM: Jerry Carrier
Director of Project Follow-Up
DATE: May 14, 1975
SUBJECT: Project Follow-Up

Please review the following questionnaire format and indicate below those questions which you find pertinent to a student follow-up study for Alvin Junior College.
I will contact you within the next week for your input and for the return of the follow-up questionnaire so that we may pass it on to other interested parties. Feel free to generate your own questions for use in the follow-up study.

P.S. Please mark your relevant questions on this memo only. Do not mark in the questionnaire generator booklet.


Questionnaire Development
Outside Resources
Review Literature
Visitation of Campuses
Knowledgeable Individuals
Question Input
Initial Screenings
Questions
Format
Questionnaire Format
Review of Questionnaire Format
Counseling Staff
President
Vice President
Deans-Dept. Heads
Registrar
Recruitment
Financial Aid
Placement
Review Recommendations & Implement Changes
Administrative Offices For Input and Format Suggestions
Review Recommendations & Reduce or add # of Questions
Student Leaders
Computer Center Return Optional
Review Recommendations Reduce & add Questions
Recycle to Administrative Offices only
Computer Center for Computer Copy
Computer Questionnaire Format & Questions
Non Computerized Format
Mailed to Small Student Body Sample
Analyze Returns and Make necessary Changes
Analyze Returns and Make necessary Changes
Completed Computerized & labeled Questionnaire
Computer labeled but Standard Format Questionnaire
Project Follow Up Mail Out!

Identification of non continuing students.

The non returning student (see definition of non returning student) will be recognized by:

Code

a. application for degree

b. application for certificate

c. final clearance check (non attendance) (can be various ; ie, financial-library-counsel)

d. final clearance (non attendance from class rolls)

e. anticipatory non return questionnaire sent to most probable non return students--full time students who have completed more than 45 S.H. prior to enrollment and who are not in a certificated program (to be correlated with class roster the following long semester)

f. academic dean-teachers-advisors-counselors--student is recorded on scholastic probation and will be identified by dean

g. Dean of men -- administrative offices

Date_____

Instructor_____

Course and Number_____

Time_____

Would you please request the following students to report to the Counseling and Testing Center at the conclusion of your class.

Student SS#

It is necessary that the students come together as a group to a process clearing them for graduation. This process will take no longer than 5-7 minutes.

Thank You

Jerry E. Carrier

Jerry Carrier

GRADUATES

Day time student _____ Night time student _____

Student Follow Up

Name _____ ID# _____ _____

Permanent Address _____

Address City Zip

College Major _____

Have you been employed this semester? _____Yes _____ No Where? _____

Job Title _____1/4 time____ 1/2 time____3/4 time____ full time ____

Do you plan to return to this college? Yes ____ No ____ Not sure ____

Do you plan to transfer to a four-year college?

Yes_____ No _____ Not sure _____

How well do you feel this college served you?

excellently _____ adequately _____ poorly _____

Please check (one or more) reasons for your withdrawal:

_____ goals were accomplished

_____ will return to Alvin Community College

Degree: List name of major:

Associate of Arts Degree _____

Associate of Science Degree _____

Certificate _____

Day time student_____ Night time student_____

Student Follow Up

Name_____ ID#_____

Permanent Address_____
(Address) (City) ZIP

College Major_____

Have you been employed this semester? No_____ Yes_____

1/4 time_____ 1/2 time_____ 3/4 time_____ full-time_____

Do you plan to return to this college? Yes_____ No_____ Not sure_____

Do you plan to transfer to a four-year college?

Yes_____ No_____ Not sure_____

How well do you feel this college served you?

excellently_____ adequately_____ poorly_____

Please check (one or more) reasons for your withdrawal:

_____ goals were accomplished

_____ insufficient funds

_____ personal or family illness or accident

_____ transportation problem

_____ going to work full-time
(have you found a job yet? Yes_____ No_____)

_____ unhappy with schedule

_____ family moving away

_____ going to another school

_____ conflicting job hours

_____ not enough time to study

_____ personal, prefer not to state

_____ other (please describe)_____

_____ change in career goals

Please write comments on the back of this sheet.

TELEPHONE EXIT INTERVIEWS

Calls To Be Made Between 9:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Hello . . . . .

My name is _____. I am calling from Alvin Community College concerning a survey for which you were chosen to participate. The purpose of this survey is to collect information from our former students so we can determine the strengths and weaknesses of our program.

My reason for calling you today is to gather some basic information and to let you know that we will be sending you a questionnaire in the near future. When you receive this questionnaire, we would appreciate you taking a few moments to fill it out and return it to us in the enclosed postage-paid, self-addressed envelope.

Would you now please answer the following questions for me.

Thank you for your time. Remember, when you receive the follow-up questionnaire, we will appreciate your quick response.

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3110 MUSTANG ROAD
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511
(713) 331-6111

Dear

We ask that you contribute to a survey, the purpose of which is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the programs offered at Alvin Community College. As as Alvin Community College non-returning student, I am certain that you have had experiences at Alvin Community College which you may wish to share with us.

I would like to assure you that all responses are confidential. Please help us; complete your questionnaire today and enclose it in the self-addressed and stamped envelope. You will contribute to the improvement of an educational system that is concerned with you and your preparation for future life.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry Carrier
Director, Project Follow Up

dm

Enclosure

P.S. If the Counseling and Testing Staff or I can be of further service, please feel free to contact us.

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONNAIRE

How would you rate Alvin Community College in the following categories?

Please circle the option which best expresses your point of view.

			Excellent 1	Good 2	Satisfactory 3	Poor 4	Unsatisfactory 5				No Opinion 6	
1.	a.	Course offerings	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	b.	Location	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	c.	Teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	d.	Cafeteria	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	e.	Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	f.	Cost	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	g.	Student services	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	h.	Parking	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	i.	Equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	j.	Buildings	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	k.	Library collections	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	l.	Financial aid services	1	2	3	4	5	6				
2.	a.	Academic standards	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	b.	Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	c.	Registration	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	d.	Counseling Center services	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	e.	Advisor system	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	f.	Freshman orientation program	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	g.	Assistance for finding employment	1	2	3	4	5	6				
3.	a.	Quality of instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	b.	Faculty interest in students	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	c.	Class size	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	d.	Grading and testing procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	e.	Faculty availability for conferences	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	f.	Circle six if you have read this line	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	g.	Counseling for course selection	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	h.	Counseling for personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	i.	Student influence in college decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	j.	Variety of extracurricular activities	1	2	3	4	5	6				
	k.	Overall college atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	6				

(Over)

Please circle Yes or No on the following questions.

4. How could the school be changed to improve its programs?

a.	Fewer required courses	Yes	No
b.	More counseling center services	Yes	No
c.	More job and career information	Yes	No
d.	Offer more courses (Specify)	Yes	No
	_____		
e.	Increase student-teacher contact	Yes	No
f.	Reduce class size	Yes	No
g.	Offer more job training courses (Vocational-technical)	Yes	No
h.	Offer more assistance in finding employment	Yes	No

5. If employed, is your work related to your college studies at Alvin Community College? Yes No

Where do you work? _____

Job Title _____ College Major _____

6. What was your principal reason for not returning to Alvin Community College?

a.	Transfer to another institution (specify)	Yes	No
	_____		
b.	Completed the program for which I was enrolled	Yes	No
c.	Work was too difficult	Yes	No
d.	Instruction was inadequate	Yes	No
e.	Unable to finance further education	Yes	No
f.	Transportation problems	Yes	No
g.	Child care problems	Yes	No
h.	Fulltime employment	Yes	No
i.	Other (specify)	Yes	No

_____

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3110 MUSTANG ROAD
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511
(713) 331-6111

Dear

Two weeks ago we mailed you a letter in which we asked you to respond to a questionnaire. Many of these questionnaires have been received and we greatly appreciate your cooperation. However, in processing these responses, certain identification problems have arisen; and we request that you again help us by answering the enclosed questionnaire.

The purpose of this survey is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the programs offered at Alvin Community College. As a non-returning student, I am certain that you have had experiences at Alvin Community College which you may wish to share with us.

I would like to assure you that all responses are confidential. Please help us; complete your questionnaire today and enclose it in the self-addressed and stamped envelope. You will contribute to the improvement of an educational system that is concerned with you and your preparation for future life.

Thank you again for your help and patience.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry Carrier
Director, Project Follow Up

dm

Enclosures

P.S. If the Counseling and Testing Staff or I can be of service, please feel free to contact us.

ALVIN JUNIOR COLLEGE
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

NOT DELIVERABLE AS ADDRESSED
UNABLE TO FORWARD
GENOA STATION
HOUSTON, TX 77034

POSTAGE DUE

ALVIN TEXAS

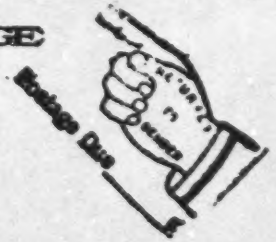
Nonprofit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 72

NIXON SANDRA L
456-19-9901
8600 THETA 391
HOUSTON • TEXAS
77034

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

53

ALVIN JUNIOR COLLEGE
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511



ALVIN TEXAS

Nonprofit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 72

P.O. BOX 2031
Carland, Tx. 75041

SHIRLEY SAM A
467-82-6168
615 TOVREA RD
ALVIN • TEXAS
77511

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

ALVIN JUNIOR COLLEGE
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

No Postage Stamp Necessary If Mailed in the United States

BUSINESS REPLY ENVELOPE
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 82 ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

Postage will be PAID by

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3110 MUSTANG ROAD
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

55

No Postage Stamp Necessary if Mailed in the United States

POSTAGE DUE 18

BUSINESS REPLY ENVELOPE
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 82 ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

Postage will be PAID by

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

3110 MUSTANG ROAD
ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

FOLLOW UP

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